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Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 240
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Opposition to HB 114 / SB 249

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Charles Barton**, and I am a **state-certified pesticide applicator** speaking today as a representative of the **Maryland State Pest Control Association (MSPCA)**. On behalf of our industry, I strongly **oppose HB 114 / SB 249**, as it will severely limit our ability to effectively treat dangerous pest infestations across Maryland.

Our association has submitted written testimony for the record, but I want to highlight two key concerns:

1. The Bill Severely Limits Effective Pest Control Options

Supporters of this bill claim that alternative treatment methods exist. While it is true that **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** often allows us to choose from multiple tools, access to **all** EPA and state-registered products is **critical** to preventing pesticide resistance and tailoring treatments to specific infestations.

Under this bill, nearly all active ingredients used in **termite control** would be **banned** jeopardizing both existing structures and new construction projects across Maryland. This restriction would have far-reaching consequences:

- **Homebuyers and Lenders:** VA and FHA loans **require** wood-destroying insect inspections. If pests are found, treatment is mandatory for loan approval. Limiting effective termite treatments puts home sales and financing at risk.
- **Federal Compliance Issues:** This bill conflicts with existing federal regulations, including **OSHA workplace safety requirements** and **FDA food-processing standards**, both of which require pest-free environments.

2. The Proposed Phase-In Period is Unrealistic and Harmful

While the bill includes phase-in periods for hospitals, schools, daycares, and lawn care, these restrictions **ignore the reality of pest control and public health protection**. Our industry already follows strict **IPM protocols** for these sensitive environments, prioritizing **non-chemical solutions** whenever possible:

- **Action Thresholds** – Identifying when intervention is necessary.
- **Monitoring & Prevention** – Sealing entry points, reducing clutter, and using non-chemical methods like traps.
- **Targeted Control Methods** – When intervention is needed, we prioritize low-risk solutions such as pheromones or mechanical traps before considering pesticide applications.

Despite these best practices, some infestations **require** the use of targeted, EPA-registered products. Restricting these products **by June of next year**—without viable alternatives approved by the **EPA or Maryland Department of Agriculture**—would leave schools, hospitals, and daycare centers **vulnerable to infestations** that pose greater health risks than the treatments themselves.

Additionally, enforcement will place a **significant burden** on the Maryland Department of Agriculture and other agencies, as these products will still be legally available for other uses in the state for the next two years.

Conclusion

The professional pest control industry strongly **opposes HB 114/SB 249** in its entirety. This legislation will:

1. **Eliminate essential pest control options**, increasing health and safety risks.
2. **Conflict with federal regulations**, creating legal and logistical challenges.
3. **Jeopardize home sales and construction projects** by limiting termite treatments.
4. **Unrealistically phase out products without viable replacements**, leaving vulnerable populations at risk.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

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